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LIBERIAN DOLLARS PER US DOLLAR

DATE	BUYING	SELLING
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These are indicative rates based on results of daily surveys of foreign exchange market in Monrovia and selected cities of Liberia. These rates are collected from the Central bank, commercial banks, parallel market and the license forex bureaux. The rates are not set by the Central Bank of Liberia.
Source: Research, Policy and Planning Department, CBL.

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Pres. Weah rallies

P11

Supporters for runoff



Pres. Weah

- "With Our Collective Supports, we'll cross the finished line"



Former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf

Ellen congratulates

P11

winners

-in the October 10 Legislative elections

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Continental News

Nigerian doctor Olufemi Olaleye sentenced to life in prison for rape in Lagos

The head of a top Nigerian cancer clinic has been sentenced to life in prison for raping his wife's teenage niece.

December 2019 and July 2022, when the girl went to live with their family.

During the trial, the doctor's wife, Aderemi Olaleye, said she

medical evidence presented by the prosecution.

But while delivering the judgement on Tuesday, Justice Rahman Oshodi said the evidence presented before the court "greatly implicates" the defendant.

Justice Oshodi described Olaleye as a "dangerous" offender who did not show any sign of remorse.

According to the judge, Olaleye's earlier confession to the police proved that he had committed the offences.

The judge rejected the arguments by the doctor's legal team that the girl was tutored by the defendant's wife to lie against him as part of a scheme to take over his property.

"I, therefore, find the defendant guilty as charged," the judge ruled.

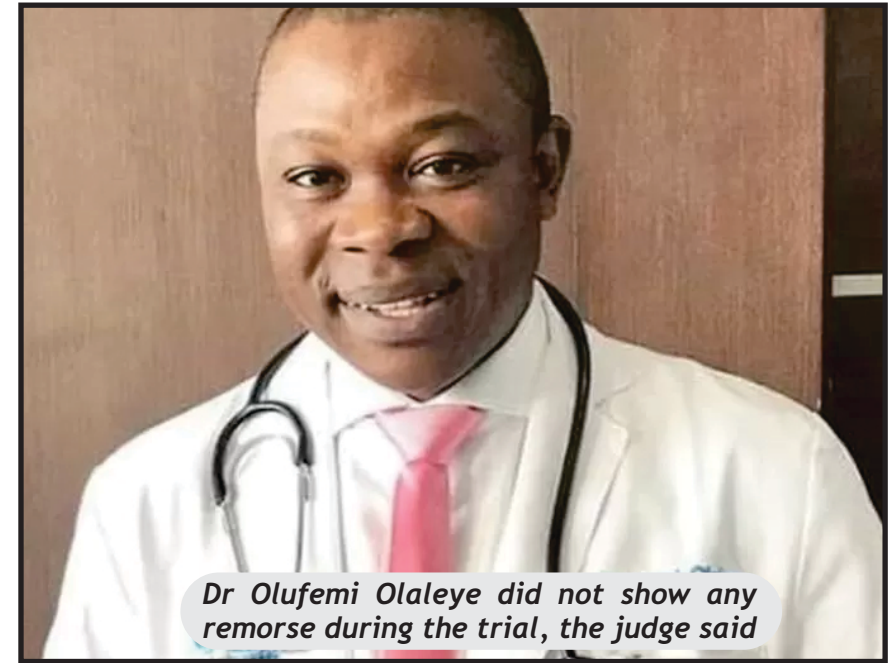
"This charge has a mandatory sentence of life imprisonment," he said.

In his plea for leniency, the doctor's lawyer, Adebisi Oridate, asked the state to recognise Olaleye's services as a cancer doctor and that he was a first-time offender.

But the judge dismissed the plea and said that Olaleye must be confined to the prison for a long period of time as proof that Nigeria's justice system frowned on sexual violence.

He also ordered the name of the doctor to be added to the Lagos State sex offenders register.

It is not clear if the doctor will appeal against the sentence. BBC



Dr Olufemi Olaleye did not show any remorse during the trial, the judge said

Dr Olufemi Olaleye sexually assaulted the girl for more than a year until his wife found out and informed the police, the prosecutor said.

The doctor had pleaded not guilty during the trial.

But a judge in a Lagos court said he found the evidence against the doctor compelling and rejected his plea.

Olaleye is the head of the Optimal Cancer Care Foundation, which offers free breast and cervical cancer screening for women.

He was arraigned in November last year on two counts of rape between

discovered the abuse after the girl told her aunt and the family's driver.

The girl, now aged 18, said the doctor had been sleeping with her and had threatened to kill her if she told anyone, the doctor's wife said.

He was also accused of forcing her to watch pornography.

Six witnesses - the girl, the defendant's wife, a medical doctor, a child-care expert and two police officers involved in the investigations - testified in the trial.

The doctor also testified in his own defence alongside his forensic physician who faulted the

Gold One mine 'hostage situation': South African miners tell of escape

Workers at a South African mine have begun to resurface after being held underground for three days in what police are calling a hostage situation.

Hostage-takers armed with weapons like clubs and mining tools had held more than 500 miners at the Gold One mine, the police said. As workers began to surface on Wednesday, one told the BBC he had to "force" his way out.

The miners were trapped on Sunday amid a dispute between two trade unions. The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) said "hooligans" had held its members against their will.

But the rival Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (Amcu) denied it had trapped workers at the mine, located near Johannesburg. Amcu insisted the miners were there willingly and were staging a "sit-in" protest.

More than 100 employees re-emerged from the mine on Wednesday morning. One

worker, who requested to remain anonymous, told the BBC: "I forced my way out because I was worried for my health."

"Lwazi" said he had some empathy for Amcu, which has been fighting for legal recognition at the mine for around five months. NUM currently has a "closed shop" agreement with the Gold One mine, which means it is the only union allowed to represent workers there.

"Although I agree with the fight

for another union to be allowed to organise at the mine... I can't say I support the method they have taken," Lwazi said.

Workers' families were gathered outside the mine on Wednesday, waiting for their loved ones to emerge.

One woman told the BBC she had been camped out since Monday morning, after her husband failed to return from his shift the night before. BBC



Miners demonstrate at the entrance of the Gold One mine as their trapped colleagues begin to resurface

Sudan Cease-Fire Talks to Resume Thursday in Saudi Arabia

Talks between Sudan's warring factions will resume Thursday in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, with a focus on securing access for humanitarian aid to reach beleaguered civilians, according to senior U.S. State Department officials.

The United States and Saudi Arabia have brokered multiple cease-fires between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) at talks in Jeddah since May, but fighting has continued in Khartoum and elsewhere, with each side accusing the other of cease-fire violations.

The U.S. adjourned the talks on June 21.

"The new round will focus on ensuring unhindered humanitarian access, achieving cease-fires, and other confidence-building measures to create conditions for the safe delivery of

unsuitability for governance in post-conflict Sudan.

Sudan's neighbors in the Horn of Africa are playing a role in the latest negotiations as the regional bloc IGAD, or Intergovernmental Authority on Development, will facilitate the resumed talks.

IGAD Executive Secretary Workneh Gebeyehu, a former foreign minister of Ethiopia, will take part in the talks for the African Union.

"We've been in constant communication with our colleagues from IGAD, as well as the African Union. They are in agreement that relaunching Jeddah is essential," another senior State Department official told reporters in a phone briefing.

IGAD is one of the regional economic communities recognized by the African Union. It has eight members: Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda.

Sudanese civilians need access to the essentials of life, which



A Sudanese woman, who fled the conflict in Murnei in Sudan's Darfur region, walks beside carts carrying her family belongings upon crossing the border between Sudan and Chad in Adre, Chad

humanitarian assistance," a senior official said.

The official emphasized that Thursday's talks will not tackle political matters, as both belligerents have been clearly informed that "there is no acceptable military solution to this conflict."

The SAF and RSF have been fighting each other since April 15, triggering a humanitarian crisis in Sudan and in neighboring countries.

Senior U.S. officials have stated that both sides, by choosing to pursue conflicts that involve indiscriminate artillery and drone strikes causing civilian casualties, have demonstrated their

include food, shelter, medicine and security, says Alex Rondos, senior adviser for United States Institute of Peace's Africa Center.

"The toughest and boldest decision for Sudan is whether an external force will be needed to protect supply routes, logistics centers and critical infrastructure," Rondos wrote in a recent Peace Institute publication.

Sudan has become the largest internal displacement crisis in the world. An estimated 5.6 million people have been displaced within and outside Sudan after more than six months of fighting, according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. VOA



Smoke rises above buildings after an aerial bombardment during clashes between the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces and the army, in Khartoum North, Sudan

EDITORIAL

Runoff election does not mean war

LIBERIAN VOTERS are bracing themselves for a runoff between President George Weah and former Vice President Joseph Nyumah Boakai, who both received the highest number of votes but did not obtain the legally required 50 percent plus one extra vote, to win the Presidency.

OFFICIAL RESULTS announced by the National Elections Commission as of Thursday, October 19, 2023, put President Weah ahead with 43.84 percent of the votes against his main rival Ambassador Boakai, with 43.43 percent, thus a need for runoff to determine a winner.

THIS IS NOT strange, both parties participated in runoff in 2017, when the UP narrowly lost to the CDC, earning Mr. Weah his first term in the Presidency. There will be a winner in the pending runoff now that the Presidential race has been cleared of the crowded candidates that characterized the first round.

BUT LIBERIANS need to reflect on the peaceful atmosphere under which the October 10 elections were generally held across the country, as they prepare for the second round in order to maintain the admiration this country just won for itself in the just-ended historic elections.

WE'RE TALKING about the peace and stability of the Motherland. Election should not put us at one another's throats in self-destruction just for the sake of a particular candidate or political party. We behaved so well at the ballot in the first round, leaving international observers raining praises, absolutely there should be no reason to abandon or to depart from such spirit in the runoff.

WE URGE BOTH President Weah and Ambassador Boakia to talk to their partisans and supporters as they ready for a second showdown. The runoff is not meant to bring Liberia to end or on its knees but to elect a leader that governs the country for not six years.

IT IS YOU the Liberian voters who have the power to make such decision through your votes. Exercise this power void of coercion and violence because you owe it to yourselves, your children and posterity.

Parties and presidents will come and go but Liberia remains the only common patrimony that we all belong to. We should not trade this nation for any politician or selfish interest.

We would have kept our admiration in the region by demonstrating in the runoff that Liberia is bigger than any party or candidate to be traded anyhow. Let's prioritize peace.

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COMMENTARY

By Adekeye Adebajo

The Crisis of African Peacekeeping

PRETORIA - Last month, Democratic Republic of the Congo President Félix Tshisekedi demanded that the United Nations begin withdrawing its 17,000 peacekeepers from his country by December. In June, Colonel Assimi Goïta's military regime in Mali made the same demand; the UN will complete the withdrawal of its 12,000 peacekeepers from that country by January.

Meanwhile, the African Union is removing its peacekeepers - numbering more than 15,000 - from Somalia, owing to Western governments' reluctance to continue funding the mission.

These untimely departures will exacerbate instability in Africa's most volatile regions: the Sahel, the Great Lakes, and the Horn of Africa. For that reason, they highlight the escalating crisis of peacekeeping in Africa.

At the root of this crisis is a paradox. UN peacekeepers - 84% of whom are deployed in Africa - tend to be well-resourced, but they often refuse to undertake dangerous enforcement missions to protect at-risk populations. African peacekeepers, by contrast, are more willing to do what is needed to enforce peace, but rarely receive the logistical and financial resources they need.

UN peacekeepers have a longstanding credibility problem in Africa. In 1961, the popular Congolese prime minister, Patrice Lumumba, was executed under the noses of a Western-dominated UN peacekeeping mission. After that, many African governments opposed the deployment of UN peacekeepers on their territory, and Burundi, Chad, Egypt, Eritrea, and Sudan expelled UN troops.

In doing so, these countries may have thrown the baby out with the bath water: the UN played an integral role in restoring peace and democratic rule to Namibia, Mozambique, and Sierra Leone. But African governments doubt not only the effectiveness of external peacekeeping forces, but also their intentions.

Their suspicion is hardly unfounded. The deployment of troops by external actors like France and the United States to African countries such as Chad, Djibouti, Niger, and Senegal have often amounted more to self-interested meddling than genuine efforts to strengthen Africa's security.

France, in particular, is viewed by many Africans as using UN peacekeeping troops largely to advance its own interests. During its 27 years leading the UN Department of Peace Operations, it has been accused of deploying self-interested missions to its former colonies, including the Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, and Mali.

It does not help that France's decade-long counterterrorism operation in the Sahel utterly failed to stop the Islamic State and al-Qaeda from establishing a strong presence. French troops have now been expelled from bases in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger.

More broadly, UN peacekeepers are often viewed by local populations - such as in South Sudan and the CAR - as observers of slaughter and displacement rather than as bulwarks against them. Like Western countries, major non-Western contributors to UN peacekeeping forces - such as Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Pakistan - tend to refuse to deploy their troops for dangerous enforcement missions in Africa.

African populations also resent that so much of the \$1 billion budgeted annually for large UN missions typically goes toward meeting the sometimes-lavish needs of the peacekeepers themselves, rather than rebuilding war-torn countries. As if that were not bad enough, there have been numerous allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation by UN peacekeepers.

And this is to say nothing of external forces like Russia's Wagner Group mercenaries. Wagner is a particularly malign actor, yet it now exerts considerable influence in Mali and largely calls the shots in the CAR.

But the African peacekeeping crisis also has local roots - beginning with institutional weaknesses on the continent. Africa has many weak states, beset by poor governance, stalled socioeconomic development, and external actors' failure to strengthen state institutions in sustainable ways - a prerequisite to long-term peace. As a result, countries have often relapsed into conflict.

Even regional powers like Nigeria and South Africa - which have led missions in Burundi, Darfur, Liberia, and Sierra Leone - grapple with internal fragilities. Likewise, fledgling African regional organizations like the AU, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern African Development Community, and the East African Community have significant weaknesses.

It is worth noting, however, that these organizations have made enormous sacrifices for the cause of peace: ECOWAS lost over 2,000 peacekeepers in ultimately successful efforts in Liberia and Sierra Leone, while a mostly East African peacekeeping force has lost over 3,500 troops in Somalia since its arrival in 2007.

To overcome the crisis, African governments must address the root causes of conflicts, with the international donor community generously supporting genuine democratic reformers in such efforts. Moreover, the UN must provide assessed contributions to support African regional organizations that continue to show a willingness to enforce peace on the continent. Care should be taken, however, to prevent the emergence of a kind of global security apartheid, with Africans sacrificing their lives in what should remain UN-led peace operations.

Countries deploying troops for UN missions must ensure that the goal of peacekeeping in Africa and elsewhere is to achieve peace, not profit, and they must be willing to allow their peacekeepers to participate in risky operations in pursuit of that goal. This will require leaders to shape domestic public opinion, rather than kowtow to it.

Finally, change within the UN is vital. The UN Security Council must broaden its permanent membership, particularly to Africa and Latin America. And, as UN Secretary-General António Guterres recently proposed, regional peace enforcers need UN-assessed support and a better-resourced UN Peacebuilding Commission that can work closely with the Security Council.

Guterres's proposals build on former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's 1992 An Agenda for Peace, which set out a framework for post-Cold War peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding. More than three decades later, implementing these solutions is still the best way to advance peace effectively on the world's most conflict-ridden continent.

OP-ED

By Mateo Estrada

The Carbon-Offset Market's Broken Promises

BOGOTÁ - The recent Climate Week NYC, which convened corporate leaders, policymakers, scientists, and others to discuss climate solutions and drive progress toward decarbonization, underscored how forests have become big business.

The fast-growing voluntary carbon market, where companies purchase nature-based offsets to compensate for their emissions, was worth \$2 billion in 2021 and could reach \$10-40 billion by 2030. Some even see forest preservation and restoration as a silver bullet for climate change.

But for indigenous communities, including my tribe in the Colombian Amazon, the arrival of carbon traders marked the start of a troubled history: dubious deals, land grabs, and violent evictions in contested territories. Our collective experience raises serious questions about the integrity of a market that is poised to expand across Latin America and Africa, as the world's largest companies increasingly rely on forest-based offsets to reach net-zero emissions.

To be sure, carbon offsets (also known as credits) were a good idea. Companies, using market mechanisms, could cancel out their carbon dioxide emissions by recognizing indigenous communities' superior conservation practices and paying them to prevent deforestation. The mechanism also reflects the importance of forests as natural carbon sinks that can contribute more than one-third of the mitigation required to meet the Paris climate agreement's goals by 2030.

The unregulated and opaque market that emerged, however, has major design flaws. Recent research by the Berkeley Carbon Trading Project shows that Verra, the world's leading carbon-crediting program, has given project developers the freedom to cherry-pick methodological approaches to maximize the quantity of credits they can receive. This has resulted in offset schemes that absorb far less carbon than promised - or none at all.

Even projects that represent genuine carbon reductions are not without controversy. The Alto Mayo in the Peruvian Amazon, which accounted for 40% of Disney's offsets between 2012 and 2020, has successfully stopped some deforestation, but not without generating ill will by violently evicting forest communities.

How did a good idea go so wrong? Weak regulation is largely to blame. Carbon-credit dealers - often called "carbon cowboys" - target indigenous communities across Latin America and Africa, sweet-talking them into signing away their rights to the carbon in their forests.

The contracts are almost always exploitative, ranging from 100-year irrevocable commitments to terms that award the dealers half of the income earned from carbon credits.

Some dealers have embraced a more aggressive approach. When TotalEnergies seized land from farmers in Congo for a reforestation scheme, it paid some around \$1 per hectare and others nothing; women farmers reported being chased away from their fields by men in trucks. The document that the farmers signed described any payment as "symbolic" and made "with a view to clearing their rights of use" to the land.

Carbon-offsetting projects are often carried out in jurisdictions with complex land-rights issues that require diligence, precision, and knowledge of indigenous people's customary land rights. But in the "Wild West" carbon market, where speed is of the essence, deals are made with little concern for history, culture, or rights. That puts indigenous communities like mine in a precarious position.

Meanwhile, the corporate appetite for forest-based carbon credits continues to grow. As businesses come under intense pressure to meet net-zero targets, buying offsets is far easier and more expedient than reducing their own emissions. And when this voracious demand collides with a disorganized and loosely regulated market, brokers are willing and able to create credits by any means necessary, regardless of the climate impact.

The voluntary carbon market's widespread greenwashing is particularly galling. While many offset schemes overstate the amount of carbon that they capture, an investigation by The Guardian, Die Zeit, and SourceMaterial, a nonprofit investigative journalism organization, concluded that a whopping 94% of Verra's rainforest offset credits yielded no benefit to the climate.

Guyana's unprecedented carbon scheme has faced similar scrutiny. Earlier this year, the Hess Corporation, which was granted a concession for oil exploration off the coast of Guyana, purchased \$750 million worth of forest-based carbon credits from the country. But indigenous peoples have watched over these forests for centuries, and the threat of deforestation is very low. In fact, the project permits a level of deforestation that is higher than the country's historic levels.

Activists point to the climate damage caused by greatly exaggerated emissions-reduction claims, especially in South America's newest oil-producing country, while some indigenous communities say the authorities have sold off what is not theirs to sell.

Indigenous peoples should be fairly compensated for the important work that we do to safeguard forests. Instead, the current system has forced us to contend with volatile offset prices, extractive brokers, and markets that disregard human rights. Even the regulatory framework for carbon markets being developed by the United Nations - which could set a dangerous precedent for all other standards - does not yet account properly for human rights.

An incremental approach to reform will not be enough to restore the voluntary carbon market's credibility. Funding for forest-protection schemes must be strictly regulated, based on credible science, and impervious to companies' demand for easy offsets. Forest communities like mine must be provided with long-term financial security and a seat at the decision-making table, not in the observers' gallery.

Nature-based carbon-offset schemes get some things right: we must look to forests as a tool for mitigating global warming and pay the people who protect them. As it stands, however, the voluntary carbon market is riddled with shortcomings, resulting in forest-protection schemes that inflate their climate impact and exploit local communities. The time is right for a radical overhaul.

OPINION

By Manica Balasegaram

Antibiotic Shortages Are Fueling Antimicrobial Resistance

GENEVA - The overuse of antibiotics is now widely recognized as one of the main factors contributing to antimicrobial resistance - often called the "silent pandemic." But what is less well known is that shortages of antibiotics also play a role in fueling AMR.

Scarce supplies of pediatric amoxicillin, used to treat Strep A, made headlines in the United Kingdom late last year, as a surge of infections left at least 19 children dead. Far from being an outlier, however, such shortfalls are common and pervasive, affecting countries across the world, and their consequences for both individuals' health and AMR's spread can be dire. That is because shortages of first-line antibiotics often lead to overuse of those that are specialized or kept in reserve for emergencies. Not only may these substitutes be less effective, but reliance on them increases the risk of drug resistance developing and infections becoming more difficult to treat in the long run.

Already one of the world's biggest killers, AMR is on the rise. In 2019, it was directly responsible for an estimated 1.27 million deaths - more than HIV/AIDS and malaria combined - and associated with 4.95 million more. So far, the global response to this growing crisis has focused mainly on trying to outpace drug-resistant bacteria through the development of new antibiotics. But in the short term, there is ample room to reduce the number of AMR deaths, as well as AMR's impact on health more broadly, by addressing some of the causes of shortages and improving access to appropriate treatments.

The same market failures that triggered the global AMR crisis are also largely responsible for antibiotic shortages. Compared to other drugs, antibiotics are often more complex and more costly to manufacture, have stricter regulatory requirements, and are less profitable. As a result, many pharmaceutical companies have significantly reduced or stopped antibiotic research and development over the last few decades.

Not only are very few new antibiotics being developed, but it has also become less attractive to produce those already on the market, partly owing to supply-chain bottlenecks and volatility. All it takes is a disruption in the supply of an ingredient or a quality-control problem, or a supplier increasing prices or halting production entirely, to bring the global supply chain of these medicines to a standstill.

But just as important has been the equally volatile demand for antibiotics caused by sudden outbreaks of bacterial infections and poor management of national supplies, which contributes to stockouts. While shortages are not uncommon in the pharmaceutical industry, they are 42% more likely for antibiotics than they are for other drugs.

Although precise numbers that would reveal the scale of the problem are difficult to obtain, much of this uncertainty could be avoided with better market intelligence.

Even though antibiotics are less lucrative than other drugs, pharmaceutical companies can still turn a profit - if they have accurate data. Improved forecasting can thus reduce risks for manufacturers and provide a stronger incentive to scale up production and expand their markets.

There is also plenty of room for improvement in the way that countries - particularly lower-income countries - procure, register, and manage these vital drugs. By expanding the capacity of national regulatory authorities, for example, it would be easier to track and coordinate supplies and create stockpiles to build greater resilience. All of this would also help provide more certainty for drug makers.

SECURE, an initiative led by the World Health Organization and the Global Antibiotic Research and Development Partnership (of which I am executive director), aims to work with countries to improve access to essential antibiotics.

That involves exploring how national regulatory authorities could serve as centralized hubs to help monitor, prevent, and respond to shortages. Eventually, SECURE intends to create more buoyant and competitive markets by encouraging countries to pool procurement, ensuring a more reliable supply.

Shortages of antibiotics are a serious problem for all countries, but there is plenty that can - and should - be done to prevent them. Given the accelerating spread of AMR and the long lead-in time to develop antibiotics, we can't afford to continue overlooking the problem. Equally important, efforts to address scarce supplies could help ensure that, when new drugs become available, they reach the people who need them.

ARTICLE

ARTICLE

The Action of the Joint Security is the Failure of LTA and MICAT

Writes Peter Quaqua

I am aware of the public sentiments, for and against the reported action taken against the owner of Freedom FM regarding the critical broadcast of the station about the Army and its Chief of Staff. Permit me not to restate that commentary, but the reported mistreatment of the station's owner by the joint security is one more reason why this country has been begging for an Independent Broadcast Regulator.

By law, the Liberia Telecommunication Authority (LTA) and the Ministry of Information are supposed to regulate the broadcast sector, but they appeared to lack the nerves to perform their regulatory mandates due obvious political thinking as most of the stations are owned or patronized by politicians. Under a normal and properly functioning regulatory environment, the inflammatory, outlandish and hate broadcast on the airwaves would not have gone unchecked.

I am not just talking about Freedom FM. Many of you would agree that the airwaves have been inundated with unwholesome and unprofessional broadcast, but we care less because some of you have benefited from those broadcasts politically. So, the action of the joint security seems justified because Freedom FM is a "progovernment station." Would you have felt the same way if said action was taken against an "opposition friendly station?" Did I hear the Attorney General of the Republic was there? I am finding it difficult to process that.

Some supporters of the Government have recently been calling for action against the Spoon Network in the wake of its coverage of the elections, probably because Spoon and Freedom are in the same league? Make no mistake; these kinds of arbitrary actions are counter-productive and should not be celebrated. Our crusade for the press freedom and free expression was to enable the civic space, not one policed by security people. Unacceptable!

The Chilling effect

When state security actors take on the role of a media regulator, it renders the media susceptible to censorship, interference and intimidation, with significant implications and chilling effects on press freedom and free speech.

In the aftermath of the chastening of the owner of Freedom FM, who is also thought to be a member of the security community, the station immediately went into panic and suspended all of its public affairs programs as announced on Facebook verbatim below:

Kindly be informed that the management of Freedom FM has suspended all political shows and news-related programs beginning this Friday, Oct 20, 2023, until further notice. Programs include:

FREEDOM MORNING RISE
FROM THE PRINT NEWS
FREEDOM HUB
FACE THE ISSUES
THE NIGHT-TIME SPIN
FREEDOM NEWS BASKET
FREEDOM NEWS HALF HOUR
FREEDOM NEWSARCHIVE
FREEDOM NEWS INSIGHT

We will remain committed to commercial obligations and open for commercial purposes to include, the airing of Jingles, Announcements, and Social, Business, and Religious Programs. Thanks!

Self-regulation

I am a proponent of self-regulation. But when the media fails to take responsibility for its errors and excesses, it invites external control with consequences for both society and the media industry itself. It must be said quickly that media self-regulation is about preserving the freedom and independence of the press, not self-censorship. When journalists submit themselves to a professional peer review, they do not leave room for state and non-state actors to censure them first. The media must be pro-active in challenging its sins.

Admittedly, the spread of media companies across Liberia points to the changing political situation in the country. Further evidence of that change in the ecosystem is the enactment in 2010 of the Freedom of Information Act and the abolition of criminal defamation laws in early 2019.

Thanks to the media for contributing to this story of change. However, much is desired in improving the operating environment and raising the professional standards of practitioners.

There is reasoning among media stakeholders that the ownership of the growing number of media outlets presents a new kind of threat to professional and independent journalism in the absence of a proper regulator. The basic responsibility of media in a post-conflict-transitioning country such as Liberia is to strengthen democracy and consolidate peace. This cannot however be achieved if ethical imperatives are sacrificed at the altar of self-serving journalists and media owners pursuing political interests.

The Regulator

The LTA is the agency of government responsible to assign and manage frequencies under the Telecommunications Act of 2007. However, it seems the LTA has largely been concerned only with the issuance of license.

Other important parameters, such as ownership, content including the amount of time devoted to news and current affairs programs, percentage of local production, protection of minors, hate speech, etc are not of their business. The Ministry of Information is responsible for broadcast media content, under the heavily-loaded PRC Decree no. 46. As part of the licensing regime, MICAT must first issue a permit to a would-be operator before the LTA acts. I took part in study that discovered stations on the air that did not submit neither to LTA nor MICAT. How is that even possible? Meanwhile, there is a moratorium on the issuance of license in Montserrado - seemingly overstretched. I must restate calls for the establishment of an independent broadcast regulator, considering all the infractions we are experiencing in the sector. Crucially, I am convinced that if we had an independent sector regulator, perhaps the AFL/joint security could never have done what we are reading in the media about the punishment the Freedom FM owner endured.

I am wondering what would have happened if this man himself was not a security personnel - the Deputy Director of the National Security Agency (NSA), it is said. Would the Army have moved on the station to make arrests? Hope not!

Looking back in our recent past, I should submit to you that if we had an independent regulator, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's government would not have been directly involved in the closure in 2011, of Power FM/TV, Kings FM/Clar TV and Love FM/TV. Again, if the country had a proper regulator, the Sirleaf government would not have been involved in the closure of Voice FM in 2016; Certainly, if the regulator was not conflicted, the government of President George Weah would have avoided the temptation of closing down Root FM in 2019.

If we had an apolitical regulator, the government of Mr. Weah would have easily excused itself from the reported denial of PUNCH FM operation and the court hearings that attended the standoff.

So, it is very much in the interest of the government of Liberia to stay clear of these technical and professional decisions making by constituting a competent authority of technicians who will act in line with internationally accepted standards and not based on political predisposition.

To this end, it will be a smart move for whoever leads the next government to relinquish some of its authorities by allowing a comprehensive reform of the powers of the Ministry of information and LTA. I am aware that even in places where proper regulatory regimes exist, state actors still encroach on the media space. Our country must find the courage to take the first by putting together dedicated professionals to do the job without any fear of reprisal.

In the cause of media rights, free expression and democratic development, I remain. God bless our country.

Congratulatory Message to Liberians

From Former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf



Former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf

Congratulations to the winners of Senate and House of Representative seats to the upcoming 55th Legislature. Thanks to all political leaders who participated in the October 10 elections and who accepted the outcome of the democratic exercise. Very special congratulations go to the brave women leaders who competed at all levels including the presidency and a few of whom proudly emerging victorious as legislators.

We enjoy all well-meaning Liberians to applaud the two highest winners of votes in the Presidential elections although none acquired the constitutional requirement of 50% plus 1 thus leading to a runoff in November. We must commend all those who contested and accepted the results in the furtherance of democracy and the rule of law in our country.

Above all, I want to express my deepest gratitude to the people of Liberia. Once again, you have shown remarkable resilience, calmness, and patience in exercising your constitutional rights for democracy and peace. Your unwavering dedication to the democratic process is truly inspiring.

Our national challenge now is to continue to defend the peace and security that we have enjoyed in the past twenty consecutive years since the end of the civil war in Liberia. We can and we will demonstrate that we can and must successfully conclude these elections free of violence. Liberia is our common patrimony that we must do well to secure, preserve, protect and work hard for the good of our people.

May God bless us all and God bless our country.

Cornelia Greene-Wesley

Executive Assistant

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Over 10,000 observers remain in Liberia

-As NEC extols Liberians for huge voting turnout

By Lincoln G. Peters

The National Elections Commission (NEC) says over 10,000 accredited International Election Observers remain in

said.

“Over ten thousand international, regional and local observers observed the October 10 polls.”

The NEC on 24 October 2023

Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa, among others.

Meanwhile, the NEC has extended thanks and appreciation to Liberians for voting in a huge turnout during the 10 October polls.

She described the turnout as a completely unprecedented, saying that Liberians have shown to the world their full participation in the democratic process of the country. “The Commissioners thank the United Nations Ambassador to Liberia, the African Women, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), for providing technical and financial supports, as well as logistical support to Liberia,” said Madam Brown-Lansanah.

She said these partners are also appreciated for their observation.

At the same time, she applauded the Ministry of Justice and the Joint Security for their steadfastness in maintaining peace, particularly for their protective and proactive response to incidents that could have disrupted the elections. “To the temporary staff and the NEC employees, we thank you for your diligence for the preparation and execution of your duties for the conduct of the 10 October polls,” she continued.

“To the owners of properties that were used as voting precincts, we also extoll you for the gesture. We are grateful to you for your selfless love and service to country,” she noted.

announced a run-off in keeping with Article 83 (b) of the Constitution of Liberia due to failure of presidential candidate and political parties to obtain 50% of the total votes.

Madam Brown-Lansanah said incumbent President George Manneh Weah and Amb. Joseph Nyumah Boakai will meet in the run-off because they secured the highest votes in the first round.

The announcement of the NEC’s final presidential and legislative tally report was graced by several international and local observation missions.

They included the Economic Community of West African States, and the Electoral



voters in queue

high gear for the runoff of the presidential election slated for 14 November 2023.

NEC Chairperson Madam Davidetta Brown-Lansanah said Tuesday, 24 October 2023 that the NEC accredited 10,000 international and local observers for the 10 October polls. “The Commissioners applaud the general public as well as international, regional and local observers, including Democracy International, Economic Community of West African States, Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA), European Union (EU), LEON, ECC, NYMOT, among others for their roles played,” she

Liberian Registry opens in Miami

The Liberian Registry is proud to announce the official opening of the Registry’s Miami, Florida office. Please refer to 800 Waterford Way, Suite 350, Miami, Florida 33126, USA. This office will serve as the primary center for Registration, Mortgage, and Deletion Services (RM&D). The Miami office will also provide technical and commercial services to our clients.

Alfonso Castillero, Chief Executive Officer of the Liberian International Ship and Corporate Registry (LISCR) commented “We are very excited to be adding Miami to the LISCR’s global base of regional offices. Our dedicated Miami Team is enthusiastic about providing the same exceptional service that our esteemed clients have come to expect from the Registry.” - Press release.

About Liberian Registry

The Liberian Registry has a long-established track record of combining the highest standards of safety for vessels and crews with the highest levels of responsive and innovative service to owners. Comprised of over 5,800 vessels aggregating 252 million gross tons, representing more than 16 percent of the world’s ocean-



NIR boss Andrew Peters

going fleet. Moreover, the Liberian Registry has a well-deserved reputation for supporting international legislation designed to maintain and improve the safety and effectiveness of the shipping industry and the protection of the marine environment.

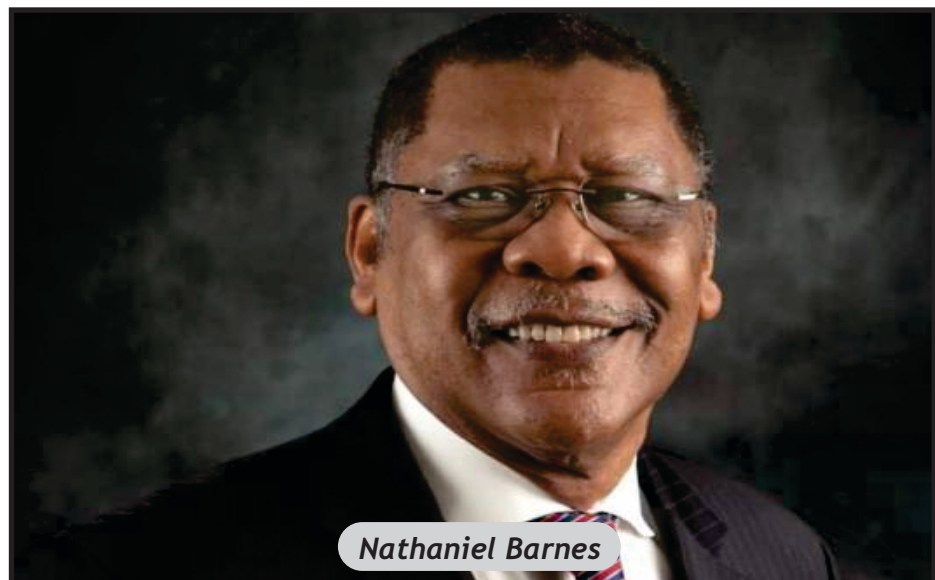
Nathaniel Barnes hails Liberians for peaceful election

Former Liberian Finance Minister and former Ambassador to the United States, Mr. Milton Nathaniel Barnes has hailed Liberians’ peaceful participation in the presidential and legislative elections.

Mr. Barnes released a statement in Monrovia on Tuesday, 24 October 2023 to appreciate evidence of the strong roots that multi-party democracy is gaining in Liberia.

“I take this opportunity to express my thanks and appreciation to the people of Liberia for their peaceful participation in the first round of the Presidential and [Legislative] Elections held on October 10, 2023,” he said.

In July this year, Mr. Barnes



Nathaniel Barnes

withdrew his candidacy for the presidency citing “the best interest of the nation” as his primary concern.

The Liberian diplomat who served both Mr. Weah and Mrs. Sirleaf’s administrations noted that Liberia has now held its 4th Legislative and Presidential Elections since the end of the fourteen-year civil conflict.

“This, I truly believe, is evidence that multi-party democracy is gaining strong roots in Liberia,” Barnes said.

“The Liberian people showed tremendous commitment to the democratic process by their tenacity in withstanding the rain and the scorching sun to cast their vote in an orderly and peaceable manner. Barnes said he is very pleased that the conduct of the Liberian people during these elections proved that they are convinced that the best way to change leadership is through the democratic process.

However, he said it is concerning that much of the pattern of voting remained along tribal and ethnic loyalties.

But Barnes applauded Liberians for demonstrating maturity and sophistication in their voting.

“About sixty-nine point eight percent (69.8%) of the former members of the House of Representatives were rejected - dismissed by the Liberian people - their employers,” he said.

“This may be an encouraging sign as it shows a significant growth in political awareness, maturity, and sophistication among Liberian voters,” said Amb. Barnes.

In time, he said, perhaps ethnicity may play a smaller role as qualifications and effectiveness of candidates become preminent.

Barnes admonished the two presidential finalists in addition to the new core of legislative leaders to beware that they will have a short “honeymoon period” before positive results in the governance of the country must begin to be seen.

“You must present a clear and progressive path towards a prosperous future. The Liberian people’s expectations are very high,” Barnes admonished.

He urged leaders to view themselves as representing the close of an era and the passing of the baton to a new generation of leaders.

He added that they must begin the next six years by building leadership steeped in intellect, experience, effectiveness, and integrity, regardless of ethnicity, gender, or even political affiliation. Additionally, the former Finance Minister acknowledged the international community for its support of the Liberian electoral process, especially the robust monitoring and observation throughout the country. He believes that there is indeed a paradigm shift in the political process of the country, urging all to welcome it and work together to improve the lives of the people.

Amb. Barnes noted that the Liberian people will no longer accept any excuses for delay or mediocrity. “As we go into the Runoff Presidential Elections, let us go in peace, continuing the same trend we exhibited during the first round,” he urged.

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I campaigned in Jehovah's Witness-style

--Appleton speaks out

By Lincoln G. Peters

Distant third-placed presidential candidate Mr. Edward Appleton, Jr., says he used a Jehovah's Witness style of campaigning that put him about 18 other candidates



Mr. Edward Appleton

votes and they have been declared the two candidates to contest in a run-off due 14 November 2023.

What appeared amazing for many here was how Mr. Edward Appleton, Jr., rose to third place, especially for a candidate who did not pull the crowd or run a vigorous campaign as others did before the polls.

But Appleton spoke out for the first time on Tuesday, responding to his critics who believe that he didn't deserve the vote he acquired in the October presidential election.

Addressing a major press conference Tuesday, 24 October 2023 at the GDM headquarters in Congo Town, Mr. Appleton said his critics' claims that he didn't campaign or deserve the votes he acquired are false and misleading.

"I first must thank God for his grace and blessings. They say I'm a ghost, I'm not. They say our party was set up to disrupt the electoral process. This is not true," said Mr. Appleton.

"They say we have endorsed a candidate, not true because we have not thanked the Liberian people, the Grassroots yet. They say that I, the standard bearer, have left the country. It's false. I'm here," Mr.

Appleton clarified.

According to him, while the supposedly big parties were looking for crowds and filling stadiums, he and his supporters were in rural Liberia talking to people one-on-one.

"While the big Political Parties were looking for crowds and filling stadiums, we were in rural Liberia talking to people one-on-one. We were talking and delivering our message which fell on good grounds," he explained.

Appleton noted that he "campaigned Jehovah Witness Style," adding that although he is not in the top two spots, he is in the position to play a key role in the upcoming run-off election.

The opposition politician pointed out that his decision to endorse must be based on a clear understanding of what the Liberian people want.

According to him, he is praying for wisdom to make a decision that will make the Liberian people and those who will vote in the future proud.

He further indicated that GDM is not going to be a looker, but it will fully participate in the democratic dispensation of a second-round election.

Mr. Appleton further said GDM intended to work hard to

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11

Liberia Ranks 112th out of 142 in Rule of Law Index

Liberia has been ranked 112 places out of 142 in the Rule of Law Index, released on Wednesday October 25 by the World Justice Project (WJP). Regionally, Liberia ranks 19th out of 34 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The region's top performer is Rwanda (ranked 41st out of 142 globally), followed by Namibia and Mauritius. The three countries with the lowest scores in the region are Mauritania, Cameroon, and Democratic Republic of the Congo (138th globally).

In the last year, 20 out of 34 countries declined in Sub-Saharan Africa. Of those 20 countries, 10 had also declined in the previous year. Among low-income countries, Liberia ranks 9th out of 18.

This latest finding according to WJP, indicates that the rule of law has once again eroded in a majority of countries this year, according to the World Justice Project (WJP) Rule of Law Index 2023.

This is the sixth consecutive

trends continued in 2023, but they are slowing, with fewer countries declining in 2022 and 2023 than in earlier years.

Constraints on Government Powers fell in 56% of countries, compared to 58% in 2022 and 70% in 2021. Likewise, a smaller majority of countries saw overall rule of law declines in this year (59%) as compared to the last two (61% and 74%).

A smaller majority of countries (56%) also experienced a decline in Fundamental Rights again this year, compared to 2022 (66%).

On the other hand, declines in the functioning of justice systems are now expanding.

Two thirds of countries (66%) saw their Index scores for Civil Justice fall this year, up from 61% of countries last year. Greater justice delays and weaker enforcement are largely to blame. Meanwhile, scores for Criminal Justice also fell in slightly more countries this year (56%) than last year (55%).

Liberia bucked the trend and is among those that saw an improvement in its Civil Justice score.



Finance Ministry denies fire was staged

By Kruah Thompson

The Director of the Donor Financed Project at the Project Financial Management Unit, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, has denied allegations that Wednesday's fire outbreak which ravaged the third floor of the Ministry of Finance was staged.

The fire incident, which occurred in the early hours of Wednesday, October 25, sent shockwaves across Liberia, with numerous citizens taking to social media platforms, accusing PFM officials of intentionally orchestrating the fire.

However, after diligent efforts by firefighting personnel to bring the situation under control, Director Papie Daniels, spoke to reporters, urging the public to be patient and allow investigators to carry out their work.

Director Daniels clarified that, fortunately, the fire only affected the administrative wing of the ministry. He assures that all classified financial

documents remain secure. According to him, most of the records that suffered harm were administrative in nature and not financial, potentially alleviating concerns about financial data loss.

Following the incident, the Ministry of Finance released an official statement, confirming the fire incident on the morning of Wednesday, October 25, 2023. The ministry expressed gratitude to the National Fire Service and its dedicated staff for gallantry displayed in extinguishing the fire, thereby safeguarding a crucial national asset. The statement further assured the public that the Central Government's financial

records remained intact, unaffected by the fire outbreak.

It was highlighted that the Liberia National Fire Service has initiated an investigation to determine the cause of the fire, with a commitment to releasing findings to the public, along with the extent of damages to the third-floor section. While the investigation is ongoing, the Ministry of Finance has announced resumption of regular operations, assuring its staff, the business community, taxpayers, and the general public that essential services will continue without disruption.



Index marking global declines in the rule of law. This year alone, the rule of law declined in 59% of countries surveyed.

However, Liberia is among the minority of countries to see its Rule of Law Index score increase this year.

Since 2016, rule of law has fallen in 78% of countries studied. The rule of law factor to decline most between 2016 and 2023 is Fundamental Rights—down in 77% of countries, including Liberia.

Over the past seven years, Index scores for Constraints on Government Powers have fallen in 74% of countries—including Liberia. Around the world, legislatures, judiciaries, and civil society—including the media—have all lost ground on checking executive power, the Index shows.

These and other authoritarian

"The world remains gripped by a rule of law recession characterized by executive overreach, curtailing of human rights, and justice systems that are failing to meet people's needs," said WJP co-founder and president William H. Neukom. "People around the world are paying the price."

Global rankings and trends Globally, the top-ranked country in the 2023 WJP Rule of Law Index is Denmark, followed by Norway, Finland, Sweden, and Germany. The country with the lowest score is Venezuela, then Cambodia, Afghanistan, Haiti, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Liberia's WJP Rule of Law Index rankings

Overall score global rank: 112 / 142

Overall score regional rank: 19 / 34

Factor score rankings:

FACTOR	GLOBAL RANK	REGIONAL RANK*	INCOME RANK**
Constraints on Government Powers	87/142	15/34	5/18
Absence of Corruption	124/142	25/34	13/18
Open Government	85/142	9/34	3/18
Fundamental Rights	82/142	12/34	5/18
Order and Security	121/142	23/34	10/18
Regulatory Enforcement	123/142	25/34	10/18
Civil Justice	125/142	29/34	14/18
Criminal Justice	113/142	25/34	11/18

Français

Les femmes réclament des sanctions contre les auteurs de l'excision

La Représentante de l'UN Women au Libéria, Comfort

nombreuses jeunes filles continuent d'être soumises à cette pratique illégale et nuisible

de la santé sur la mutilation génitale féminine (MGF), la pratique persiste en raison d'une combinaison de normes culturelles et d'un manque d'application efficace.

Le rapport a également indiqué que le traitement des complications de la MGF coûte chaque année aux systèmes de santé 1,4 milliard de dollars américains, un chiffre appelé à augmenter à moins qu'une action urgente ne soit entreprise en vue de son abandon. Cependant, des violations continuent de se produire, tandis que des efforts sont déployés pour sensibiliser aux effets nuisibles de cette pratique avec l'aide du Conseil National des Chefs et Anciens du Libéria (NACCEL), du Ministère de l'Intérieur, du Ministère du Genre et de la Protection Sociale, d'organisations de la société civile et de partenaires internationaux.

Cette question est étroitement liée aux normes culturelles et aux traditions pratiquées dans 11 régions du pays, à savoir : les comtés de Bong, Lofa, Nimba, Grand Gedeh, Maryland, River Gee, River Cess, Grand Kru, Sinoe, Margibi et Gbarpolu, tandis que des progrès vers son élimination sont toujours en cours.

S'exprimant à ce sujet, la

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9

Éditorial

Le second tour de la présidentielle n'est pas la guerre

Les électeurs libériens se préparent à un second tour opposant le président George Weah à l'ancien vice-président Joseph Nyumah Boakai, les deux ayant recueilli le plus grand nombre de votes, sans toutefois atteindre le seuil légalement requis de 50 pour cent plus une voix supplémentaire pour remporter la présidence.

Les résultats officiels annoncés par la Commission électorale nationale, le jeudi 19 octobre 2023, placent le président Weah en tête avec 43,84 pour cent des votes, contre 43,43 pour cent pour son principal rival, l'ambassadeur Boakai, d'où la nécessité d'un second tour pour déterminer le vainqueur.

Cette situation n'est pas étrange, car les deux partis ont déjà participé à un second tour en 2017, lorsque l'UP a perdu de justesse face au CDC, ce qui a permis à M. Weah d'obtenir son premier mandat à la présidence. Il y aura assurément un vainqueur lors de ce second tour, maintenant que la course présidentielle a été épurée des nombreux candidats qui caractérisaient le premier tour.

Cependant, les Libériens doivent se rappeler l'atmosphère pacifique dans laquelle se sont déroulées les élections du 10 octobre dans l'ensemble du pays, alors qu'ils se préparent au second tour. Cela leur permettra de préserver l'admiration que ce pays vient de gagner grâce aux élections historiques récemment achevées.

Nous évoquons ici la paix et la stabilité de la Mère-Patrie. Les élections ne doivent pas nous diviser et nous pousser à l'auto-destruction pour le bien d'un candidat ou d'un parti politique en particulier.

Nous nous sommes comportés de manière exemplaire lors du premier tour des élections, suscitant les éloges des observateurs internationaux. Il n'y a donc absolument aucune raison d'abandonner ou de dévier de cet état d'esprit lors du second tour.

Nous encourageons à la fois le président Weah et l'ambassadeur Boakai à dialoguer avec leurs partisans et partisanes pendant qu'ils se préparent pour ce second affrontement. Le second tour n'a pas pour but de mettre fin au Libéria ni de le mettre à genoux, mais bien de choisir un dirigeant pour gouverner le pays pendant les prochaines années.

C'est vous, électeurs libériens, qui avez le pouvoir de prendre cette décision grâce à vos votes. Exercez ce pouvoir de manière libre, sans contrainte ni violence, car vous le devez à vous-mêmes, à vos enfants et à la postérité.

Les partis et les présidents passeront, mais le Libéria demeure le seul patrimoine commun auquel nous appartenons tous. Nous ne devrions pas sacrifier cette nation pour un politicien ou des intérêts égoïstes.

En démontrant, lors du second tour, que le Libéria est plus grand que n'importe quel parti ou candidat à échanger de quelque manière que ce soit, nous pourrions préserver notre admiration dans la région. Priorisons pour la paix.



Lamprey, a souligné la nécessité d'imposer des sanctions sévères à l'encontre de ceux qui violent l'interdiction de la mutilation génitale féminine (MGF) au Libéria.

Il s'est écoulé près de neuf mois depuis que le Chef Zanzan Karwor, Président du Conseil National des Chefs et Anciens du Libéria (NACCEL), a annoncé une interdiction nationale de la MGF à Sonkay Town, dans le comté de Montserrado.

Malgré l'interdiction en février 2023, des rapports indiquent que de

sans avoir leur mot à dire, ce qui est décrit comme une violation de leur droit de donner un consentement éclairé à toute procédure pratiquée sur leur corps.

Au Libéria, comme dans de nombreux autres pays, cette pratique ne présente aucun avantage pour la santé des filles et des femmes, provoquant des saignements graves, des problèmes urinaires, puis des kystes, des infections, ainsi que des complications lors de l'accouchement et un risque accru de décès des nouveau-nés.

Selon le rapport de janvier 2023 de l'Organisation mondiale

Sénatoriales 2023 : 11 sénateurs mis à la porte

D'après les résultats des élections présidentielles et législatives du 10 octobre 2023, il semble qu'au moins 11 sénateurs sortants aient été évincés du Sénat. Cela signifie que seuls quatre des 15 sénateurs sortants qui se représentaient ont réussi à conserver leur siège. Les 11 sénateurs concernés sont les suivants : le sénateur Cllr. Varney G. Sherman, du comté de Grand Capemount, a été remplacé par Dabah M. Varvpilah. Cllr. Sherman,

ancien président du parti d'opposition Unity Party, avait choisi de se présenter en tant que candidat indépendant, mais il a été finalement battu par un candidat de son ancien parti, Dabah M. Varvpilah, de l'UP. Ensuite, le sénateur Morris G. Saytumah, du comté de Bomi, un autre membre influent de l'ancien parti au pouvoir, l'Unity Party, a changé de camp à la dernière minute pour soutenir la réélection du président en exercice, George Weah. Il a été hué par les citoyens au début de la campagne du 10

octobre 2023 et a finalement été battu par l'ancien président de la Chambre des représentants, Alex Taylo, un ancien membre de la Coalition pour le Changement Démocratique (CDC) au pouvoir, qui a retiré son soutien et s'est présenté en tant que candidat indépendant. Dans le comté de Bong, le sénateur le Dr. Henrique Tokpah a vu sa carrière législative de 18 ans prendre fin lorsqu'il a été battu



Sen. Kaipay

Sen. Teahjay

Sen. Zargo

Français

Starts from page 8 **Les femmes réclament**

Représentante de l'UN Women au Libéria a déclaré que l'appel à des sanctions strictes à l'encontre des contrevenants est une réponse à la persistance de la pratique de la mutilation génitale féminine (MGF) et qu'il s'agit d'une étape nécessaire pour dissuader les individus et les communautés de s'engager dans cette tradition nuisible.

Elle a fait ces remarques lors de la cérémonie de remise rituelle qui s'est déroulée le vendredi 20 octobre 2023 à Gbaota, dans le comté de Bong, où le Conseil National des Chefs et Anciens, représenté par son adjoint, Jemmie Jpokia, a organisé une cérémonie traditionnelle marquant officiellement la remise des outils traditionnels utilisés pour pratiquer la MGF et la fermeture du bush dans la région. Au Libéria, il existe deux grandes sociétés ou groupes ethniques historiquement associés à la pratique de la mutilation génitale féminine (MGF).

Il s'agit de la Société Krahn : les Krahn, qui résident principalement dans la région du sud-est du Libéria, ont une longue tradition de pratique de la MGF. Cette pratique est profondément ancrée dans leurs croyances culturelles et traditionnelles. Deuxièmement, la Société Bassa : les Bassa, également situés dans la région du sud-est du Libéria, sont connus pour pratiquer la MGF, en particulier sous la forme de la Société Sande, qui est une société secrète féminine associée à l'initiation des jeunes filles. La Représentante de l'UN Women, qui joue un rôle clé dans la promotion de l'égalité des sexes et des droits des femmes, a réitéré leur engagement à soutenir les

organisations qui éduquent les communautés sur le respect de l'interdiction dans les 11 régions. Elle a souligné : "Même lorsque vous avez une interdiction, la mise en œuvre n'est pas à cent pour cent, et c'est pourquoi il y aura des sanctions pour ceux qui enfreignent la loi si vous l'avez."

En même temps, elle a appelé à une sensibilisation accrue et à l'éducation sur les conséquences de la MGF. Elle a affirmé que de tels efforts, s'ils réussissent, pourraient jouer un rôle significatif dans le changement des normes culturelles profondément enracinées et garantir que les filles et les femmes ne soient plus soumises à cette pratique nuisible.

"C'est essentiel, non seulement pour protéger les droits et le bien-être des femmes et des filles, mais aussi pour changer les attitudes de la société et mettre fin à cette tradition nuisible une fois pour toutes."

L'appel à des sanctions strictes de la part de la Représentante de l'UN Women s'inscrit dans le cadre des efforts mondiaux plus larges visant à éliminer la MGF et à promouvoir l'égalité des sexes dans le monde.

On s'attend à ce que cela encourage les gouvernements et les communautés à prendre des mesures plus décisives contre la pratique en adoptant une législation qui permettra finalement de créer un monde plus sûr et plus équitable pour les femmes et les filles. Le gouvernement suédois a salué le Libéria pour l'interdiction de la mutilation génitale féminine, le qualifiant de réussite révolutionnaire pour le pays d'Afrique de l'Ouest.

L'Ambassadeur a salué l'engagement, leadership et la décision de s'unir sur la base de la tradition et de la culture pour prendre une décision bénéfique tant pour les femmes que pour les hommes au Libéria.

Starts from page 8 **Sénatoriales 2023 : 11**

par Johnny Kpehe, un candidat indépendant dont la popularité a explosé dans le comté de Bong lors des élections de 2023.

Dans le comté de Grand Bassa, le sénateur Jonathan Kaipay a été le quatrième sénateur à quitter son siège au profit de l'ancien président pro tempore du Sénat, Gbehzonhngar M. Findley, qui effectue un retour. Ancien membre de l'Unity Party de l'opposition et sympathisant de la CDC au pouvoir, Findley a finalement choisi de se présenter en tant que candidat indépendant après s'être rallié au Parti Politique Collaboratif (CPP). Findley est considéré comme le parrain montant de la

politique de Bassa.

Findley avait également été ministre des Affaires étrangères dans le gouvernement de Weah avant de démissionner pour se présenter aux élections sénatoriales partielles de décembre 2020, où il avait été battu par le sénateur en exercice Nyonblee Karnga-Lawrence.

Le sénateur Milton Teahjay, ancien sympathisant de la CDC lors du second tour des élections présidentielles de 2005, avait ensuite rejoint l'Unity Party après sa nomination par l'ex-présidente Ellen Johnson Sirleaf en tant que surintendant de Sinoe. Il avait quitté ce poste pour se présenter au Sénat en 2017, qu'il avait remporté.

Au cours des mois précédant

Les leaders traditionnels du comté de Bong disent non à la mutilation génitale féminine (MGF).

Les leaders traditionnels du comté de Bong ont volontairement remis leurs outils traditionnels utilisés pour la mutilation génitale féminine (MGF).

Ils se sont également engagés publiquement à fermer officiellement les écoles de brousse, communément appelées la Société Sande, et à renoncer à leurs propriétés traditionnelles pour mettre fin à la pratique séculaire de la MGF au Libéria.

La cérémonie de remise a eu lieu le vendredi 20 octobre 2023, lorsque le Conseil national des chefs et des anciens, représenté par son adjoint, Jemmie Jpokia, a organisé une cérémonie traditionnelle marquant officiellement la fermeture de l'école de brousse à Gbaota, dans le comté de Bong.

Pour renforcer leur engagement à mettre fin à la MGF dans le comté, les Zoes ont entrepris une marche symbolique, portant leurs outils traditionnellement utilisés pour la pratique de la MGF sur leur tête, alors qu'ils voyageaient de la brousse jusqu'au lieu de la cérémonie.

Lors de l'événement, ils ont remis ces instruments à Judee Andee, surnommée reine traditionnelle, en geste symbolique marquant leur détermination à mettre fin à la pratique de la MGF dans cette partie du comté. Lors de cet événement, les leaders traditionnels étaient visiblement émus alors qu'ils étaient assis par terre pour écouter leur reine et le chef du conseil traditionnel du Libéria déclarer leur intention de poursuivre le rite de passage important des jeunes femmes vers l'âge adulte tout en excluant la MGF de leur tradition culturelle.

S'exprimant lors de l'occasion, la représentante de l'UN Women au Libéria, Comfort Lamptey, a salué les leaders traditionnels pour leurs efforts inlassables visant à éradiquer la MGF au Libéria. Elle a souligné que le changement culturel est difficile, mais impératif pour un meilleur Libéria où les jeunes filles peuvent réaliser leur plein potentiel dans la société.

Elle a en même temps offert des paroles d'encouragement aux émotifs leaders traditionnels, mettant en avant l'impact considérable de leurs actions, qui, selon elle, s'étendra bien au-delà des frontières du Libéria. Elle a exhorté les Zoes des autres comtés du Libéria ayant des centres patrimoniaux à poursuivre des initiatives similaires, en témoignage de leur engagement à mettre fin à la MGF.

De plus, la représentante de l'UN Women au Libéria a promis son soutien aux anciennes Zoes des onze comtés pratiquant la MGF pour les aider à trouver des sources de revenus alternatives après avoir abandonné leurs outils. Ce soutien comprend la fourniture d'outils agricoles, et ils aspirent à obtenir le soutien d'autres partenaires dans la lutte contre la MGF.

Cependant, lors de la cérémonie rituelle à Gbaota Town, dans le comté de Bong, les leaders des Zoes ont été interrogés trois fois par Jemmie Jpokia, adjoint du chef du Conseil national des chefs et des anciens du Libéria, s'ils étaient d'accord avec la décision de renoncer à leurs outils.

Au nom de tous, Judee Andee a accepté, et avec des larmes dans les yeux, ils ont tous répondu de manière emphatique, "Oui, nous sommes

d'accord." La cérémonie a été marquée par des moments émotionnels, marquant un tournant significatif dans la lutte contre la MGF.

Pour souligner leur position lors de l'occasion, le gouvernement suédois a félicité le Libéria pour sa réalisation révolutionnaire en renonçant à ses outils traditionnels et a souligné l'importance de leur engagement et de leur leadership dans la priorisation du bien-être des femmes et des hommes.

L'ambassadeur de Suède au Libéria, Urban Sjöström, a déclaré que la Suède est un partenaire de longue date du Libéria, et c'était un honneur d'assister à la remise symbolique et à l'engagement conjoint de tous les partenaires pour interdire et éradiquer la MGF.

Il a ajouté que cela est également une preuve du rôle essentiel et du partenariat solide dirigé par le chef traditionnel, le conseil traditionnel des anciens et les chefs de la communauté locale, ainsi que de l'engagement ferme du gouvernement dans cette entreprise.

"Vous avez la société civile et des partenaires internationaux tels que l'UN Women et la Suède, capables de renforcer ce processus localement détenu, et nous discutons de la durabilité de cette initiative", a-t-il noté.

Selon lui, il pourrait s'agir d'un effort collaboratif impliquant le conseil traditionnel du gouvernement, la société civile et les communautés locales pour promouvoir cette cause car leurs partenaires d'investissement le voient d'un très bon œil. L'objectif est de garantir que les filles et les garçons, les femmes et les hommes aient des opportunités et des droits égaux au Libéria.

"De la Suède, nous percevons que c'est ce qui favorise véritablement la prospérité, le développement et la contribution collective de chacun à la société. Par conséquent, cela doit être soutenu, dirigé par les leaders traditionnels, le gouvernement, la société civile et les communautés."

La reine traditionnelle du Libéria, Judee Andee, a également pris la parole lors de la cérémonie de remise des outils, soulignant la nécessité d'efforts soutenus pour faire respecter l'interdiction de la MGF, même si elle a été officiellement interdite.

Elle a souligné que les efforts pour éradiquer la MGF au Libéria sont financés par l'UN Women, le gouvernement suédois et les Nations Unies. De plus, elle a expliqué que des plans sont en cours pour établir des centres patrimoniaux professionnels dans les onze comtés où la MGF est pratiquée, dans le but de doter les femmes de compétences alternatives.

"En ce qui concerne le comté de Bong, l'établissement d'un tel centre est en cours d'approbation, et l'on encourage les partenaires internationaux à

LIBERIANS

DEBATE

Topic: October 10, 2023 Elections

By Naneka A. Hoffman

Liberians have been reflecting on the Tuesday, 10 October presidential and general elections, as they prepare for runoff between the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change and the main opposition Unity Party scheduled for 14 November 2023. Read their observations below on the first round of polling, which send a strong hope for the runoff.



Jerry Yarsiah

the paper is empty that vote becomes invalidated vote. Some people expressed angry in the first round of the elections by marking X on other candidates that they didn't vote for. I think it also led to invalidate votes. One of the things I noticed is that the polling staff didn't do well in educating voters to find their names and which room they supposed to go and cast their votes. It was a little bit difficult on Fendall Campus where some of the places were used as polling centers. Voters were right because they didn't know where to go and cast their vote. That was one of the challenges I observed in the first round of the election."

"The first round of the elections wasn't bad. But I have some concerns about the invalidated votes. From my own perspective, the National Elections Commission didn't do proper awareness in the counties. Some people decided not to vote at all, because they don't

have interest. Some voted and they voted on party level. I decided to vote for my party, but I don't have interest in presidential candidates so I voted for representative or senator and the invalidate votes; the moment you didn't write on that paper and

"I see that the first round of elections was tough because there were 20 presidential candidates, and coming to legislative candidates in those areas had great challenges in the process. Let's us all know that European Union accused the ruling regime of using state resources to run campaign. And some of us saw the vehicle that belongs to Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Transport and Ministry of Health. Those vehicles were used to run campaign. Those are the things we need to work on. Political period is not a time to make yourself feel that you are more superior than the country; that is how more politicians



Isaiah J. Gbainhea

are. Joseph Boakia needs to do his underground work. The votes that came from the southeast, if political parties start to send their poll watchers, you will now

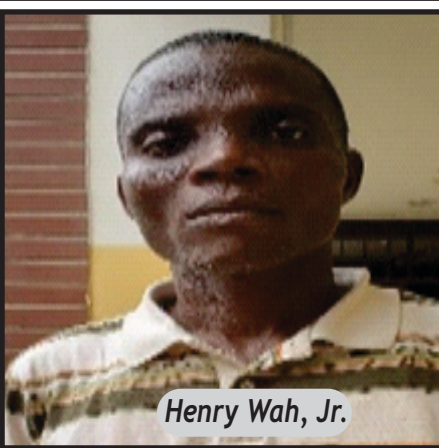
observe that those votes came from the southeast and other places, so now the people stand together and forget about tribalism and vote for Liberia, not for individuals."

"The first round of the election was peaceful. People exercised their voting right peacefully, and it was free and fair. The people came out in their huge numbers during the first election in a peaceful manner and voted candidates of their choice and the country was peaceful. We pray that this coming second round election, Liberians will go out in their numbers again and vote peacefully to maintain the peace in our country,



Roberts Political Zlatan Ibrahimovic

because Liberia is all we have."



Henry Wah, Jr.

"I believe the first round was fair, free and transparent. The people have their will and it was huge turnout. And the Liberian people spoke of the first round of the elections. The results are clear; the people came out in their numbers and voted for who they intended to vote for at that time."

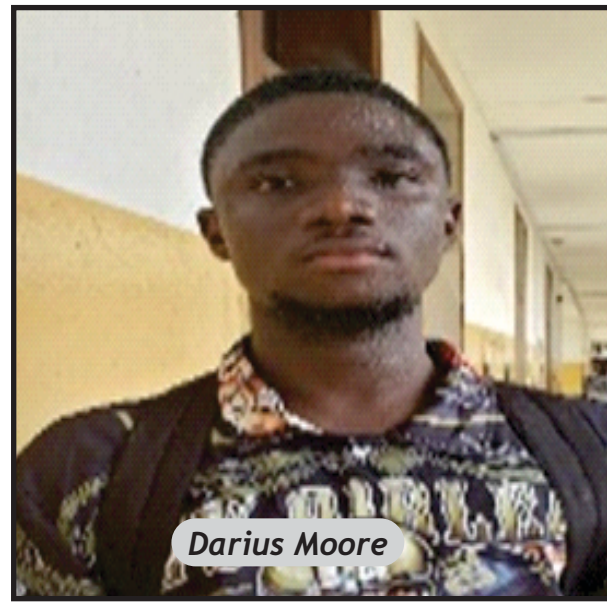
"The first round of the election was peaceful. And also there was transparency in Bomi County. I worked in Bomi County, as presiding officer. And where I worked, there was free, fair and transparent elections. I didn't experience difficulty; everything was on course in the first round. I am appealing to the National Elections Commission to sensitize the



Blama Tumah

people how to vote, because in this first election, there were huge invalid votes. The people were not adequately educated."

"I was disappointed in the first round of the elections, I realized that in the announcement of the elections' results, I felt that it was too slow and the process was done very slowly. Country like Liberia with 2.4 million registered voters I think that it should be done in a faster process."



Darius Moore

Pres. Weah rallies supporters for runoff

By: Emmanuel wise Jipoh

President George Manneh Weah has jumpstarted his campaign activities ahead of a crucial Presidential run-off in less than 20 days against closed rival former Vice

the party for a second term to complete his administrations' unfinished projects.

"Now is the time to crown the success we achieved on October 10 with your diligent supports. Our Party the Mighty Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) has come out as

2017, we were at this same juncture, but our collective efforts, resilient to reshape this country led us to victory. We stand by it to do it again," "Mr. Weah said amidst cheers from jubilant supporters.

He also reminded supporters of how his administration has



President Nyumah Joseph Boakai.

The runoff has become necessary as both men failed to secure 50% plus one vote to win outright during the first round. Mr. Weah obtained 43.83% of the votes, while his main challenger Amb. Boakai came second with 43.44% of the total votes cast on October 10. Both men went head to head in the 2017 Presidential runoff that ushered in Mr. Weah's first six years term.

In his first words to supporters after the October 10 polls, incumbent President Weah rallied supporters to entrust his administration with a mandate for a second term to continue with the unprecedented developments, the nation has enjoyed for the last five years.

Speaking at his party's headquarters in Congo Town on Wednesday, October 25, Mr. Weah rallies a "Call to Action for every CDCians, and Liberians to joined and support

number one, because of your commitment and loyalty which has not gone unnoticed," said Mr. Weah.

President Weah felt confident and assured that with the dedication of his supporters, the CDC can rest assured of a bigger victory ahead. "With your dedication, commitment, and loyalty, it's clear that we are still in a strong position, and we must stake together a "Call to Action for every CDCians with our Collective efforts, "We'll cross the finish-line with victory," said President Weah.

Mr. Weah failed to secure the 50 plus one vote needed to stop a runoff with his main opponent, former Vice President Boakai of the Unity Party (UP) in a tight election on October 10.

He reminded supporters of how far they have come to let go of the opportunity to complete the unfinished projects.

"Let us be reminded that in

worked tirelessly to improve the lives of Liberians adding that their quest for more development has been acknowledged. "I understand your desires for more and I can assure you that we are fully prepared to do better and greater things in our second terms." He said, while vowing to accelerate efforts to fight corruption. He told supporters of how his administration has reconstituted the Liberian Anti-Corruption Commission, that will accelerate efforts to fight corruption and ensure accountability across the country during his second mandate if given. Mr. Weah also used the occasion to condemn electoral violences that occurred during the October 10 Presidential and Legislative elections, specifically in Foya, Lofa County and Somalia Drive, Montserrado, something the President describes as unworthy and must be denounced by all. -Edited by Othello B. Garblah

Ellen congratulates winners

Former President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf has sent message of congratulations to the winners of Senate and House of Representative seats to the upcoming 55th Legislature.

In her message issued on Wednesday, October 25, the former Liberian Leader thanked all political leaders who participated in the October 10 elections and who accepted the outcome of the democratic exercise.

"Very special congratulations go to the brave women leaders who competed at all levels including the presidency and a few of whom proudly emerging victorious as legislators.

We enjoin all well-meaning Liberians to applaud the two highest winners of votes in the

contested and accepted the results in the furtherance of democracy and the rule of law in our country," Mrs. Sirleaf said.

The former first female President further expressed her deepest gratitude to the people of Liberia, saying "Once again, you have shown remarkable resilience, calmness, and patience in exercising your constitutional rights for democracy and peace. Your unwavering dedication to the democratic process is truly inspiring."

"Our national challenge now is to continue to defend the peace and security that we have enjoyed in the past twenty consecutive years since the end of the civil war in Liberia. We can and we will demonstrate that we can and must successfully conclude these elections free of violence. Liberia



Presidential elections although none acquired the constitutional requirement of 50% plus 1 thus leading to a runoff in November. We must commend all those who

is our common patrimony that we must do well to secure, preserve, protect and work hard for the good of our people," she concluded.

CPP sets 12-point conditions

Starts from back page

of 30 percent women participation in government, the establishment of National Youth Service program, and loan scheme for business development to assist Liberian entrepreneurs including women and youths.

Other commitments required are the establishment of a war and economic crimes court in Liberia to deal with the culture of impunity, undertake a review of the Liberian Constitution aimed at strengthening democratic governance and fostering unity, a major judicial reform to strengthen judicial independence, improve access to justice, and establishment of a claims court.

The 12-point commitment also requested for the decentralization of public

administration, audit all public institutions including the National Legislature, enforcement of the assets declaration by public officials, and a commitment to simplify the tax code, rules and regulations to make Liberia business friendly, and accommodation of Liberian entrepreneurs.

Other demands are commitments to halt drugs peddling and trafficking, electoral reform to avoid repeat of electoral fraud, and a commitment to religious tolerance and ensure an inclusive Liberia.

Cummings said the party which seeks the CPP support in the runoff, must commit to the CPP vision for a better Liberia and its real change agenda, to fundamentally change politics as usual for the betterment of all Liberians.

I campaigned in Jehovah's

Starts from page 7

change the paradigm, which will bring about generational change in the not-too-distant future.

"With the enthusiasm shown by the Liberian people in the first round in electing their leaders, it exhibited pertinently that the Liberian

people believe in democracy and good governance," he said.

He noted that he along with his vice standard bearer and all their officers and members commit that they stand for peace, justice, good governance, human rights, and the socioeconomic development of the Liberian

people.

Meanwhile, Mr. Appleton expressed appreciation and excitement to the Liberian people for voting for him during the presidential election.

"This press conference was called to thank the Liberian people, the grassroots, who voted to tell them know that we hear you."

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CPP sets 12-point conditions for support in run-off

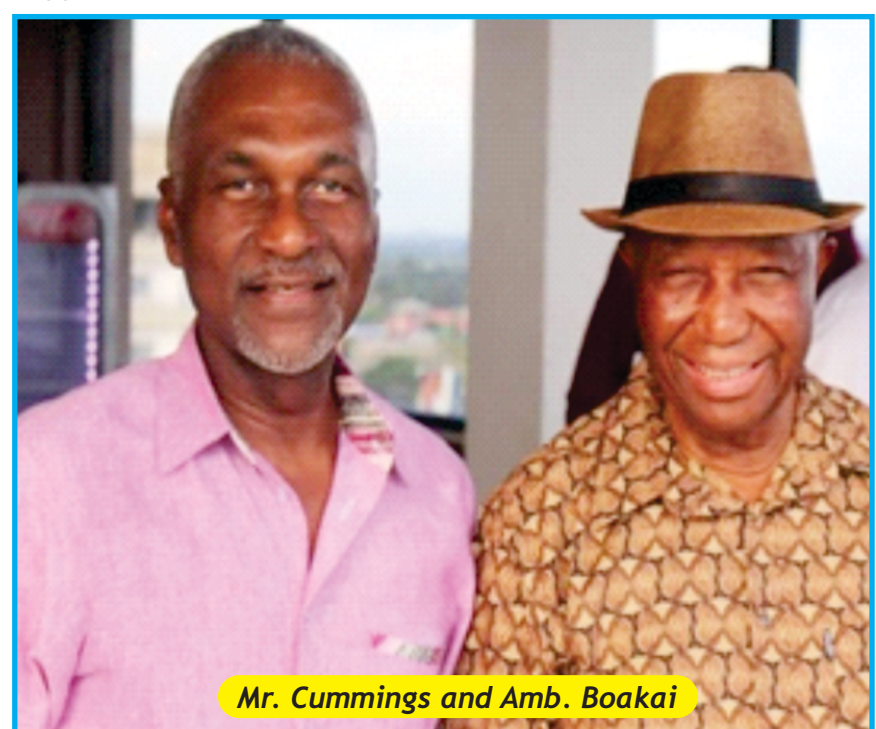
The Collaborating Political Parties (CPP) has advanced 12-point agenda items for discussions and consideration as conditions for its support in the run-off to either the CDC and the Unity Party Political Parties (CPP) that will determine which side the CPP will support in the run-off.

the Presidential poll and called for a forensic examination of the ballots with no cost to the National Elections Commission.

"Although, the announced results, which we are investigating do not give us power to directly drive the real change agenda, we know that without commitments to systemic change in how we have repeatedly governed ourselves we would simply play musical chairs with leaders only to keep doing the same thing over and over without any improvement in the lives of the people," Cummings told journalists in Monrovia.

The CPP Standard Bearer said he refuses to be a partner in keeping the Liberian people, with a divided nation and a corrupt governing system, and has therefore requested the CPP team to engage the CDC and the Unity Party on the 12 point agenda for real change.

The 12-points advanced by the CPP include a commitment to gender equality, giving a minimum



Mr. Cummings and Amb. Boakai

the Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC), of President George Weah or the Unity Party (UP), of ex-Vice President Joseph Boakai.

on Tuesday, October 24 held separate meetings with the CPP Standard Bearer seeking his support in the Run-off slated November 14, according to the National Elections Commission (NEC). The CPP, along with two other political parties, have expressed serious misbelief and doubts of the results of

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